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THE MODERN CHURCHMAN

A Magazine to maintain the cause of
TRUTH, FREEDOM, and COMPREHENSIVENESS
in the Church of England.

EDITOR: REV. H. D. A. MAJOR, B.D.

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THE

MODERN CHURCHMAN

By identifying the new learning with heresy, you make orthodoxy synonymous with ignorance.—*Erasmus.*

A State without the means of change is without the means of its conservation.—*Edmund Burke.*

No. 12. MARCH, 1921. Vol. X.

THE CHRIST OF HISTORY*

By the Rev. John Gamble, B.D.

MY object is to consider the picture of the author of our Christian faith presented to us by recent research. I address especially those who recognize the necessity of such research, who believe that we cannot avoid it if we would, and that we ought not even if we could. Much of what follows will appear to those who do not admit such necessity to be unprofitable and even mischievous speculation. Some of the opinions to which I shall endeavour to do full justice may deserve these epithets. It must, however, be remembered that the opinions are widely diffused, and exercise an important influence. If we neglect them, the neglect will seem to many to be the outcome of fear or the contemptuousness of ignorance.

What, then, is the actual position of the Christian teacher when he proceeds to set forth Jesus as the Christ, and the author of eternal life, to a world shaken by a great war? Who is the Christ to whom he assigns this pre-eminence and for whom he makes this unique claim? I shall say nothing, you will observe, of the Christ of dogmatic definition or the Church's Creeds, because we are now thinking of a time when dogmatic definition had not begun and the Creeds existed only in germ.

The choice of the teacher, then, guided by recent research, lies among three alternatives. He has to choose between a

* A lecture delivered in the Chapter Room of Bristol Cathedral on February 24th, 1921.

Didactic Christ, an Eschatological Christ, and a Mythical Christ. A few words will be enough to make these formidable adjectives less terrifying.

(*a*) *The Didactic Christ.* To many, learned and unlearned, Christ is above all else a Teacher. Teaching is the object of His mission. His intention was to unfold a new way of life, a way which, if it were only universally followed, would make the Kingdom of Heaven, of which He so often spoke, a present reality, would bring heaven down to the earth. Men would then own the ties of brotherhood and live as children of a Common Father. Nation would no longer war with nation, nor class with class. Mutual helpfulness would overcome antagonism. Wars would cease, crime would be unknown. Thus the Gospel becomes a call to social regeneration:

> 'I will not cease from mental fight,
> Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,
> Till we have built Jerusalem
> In England's green and pleasant land.'

The social reformer is thus especially the blessed of the Lord. Such is the conception of Christ presented to us in the writings of Tolstoy. Such substantially is the view taken in the well-known book, *Ecce Homo*. For these writers it was what Jesus said and taught that mattered more than what He was or did. He illustrated His words by His example, and thus added immensely to their force, but His message is to be found in His teaching. He stands before us as the greatest of religious humanitarians, calling upon us to love one another, as He loved us. These writers were, of course, aware that there was much else in the Gospels besides this humanitarianism. The residue, however, they believed to be Jewish pageantry, or otherwise additions to the primitive tradition—the homage of passionate devotion or the unconscious growth of legend. Such is the Didactic Christ and substantially the Jesus of liberal theology. I make for the moment but one observation upon this conception. The teaching upon which the stress is thus laid plainly needs to be interpreted. Words spoken in the first century cannot be applied to the twentieth century without thought and care. The Divine Teacher confronted by such and such

situation uttered such and such a precept. The question is: "What is the perpetual validity of the precept? How can it be applied to a totally different situation?" Thus the very necessity of interpretation obliges us to pass behind the words to the mind of the speaker. If we do not we may seriously misunderstand him and make him mean what he never intended.

(*b*) *The Eschatological Christ.* As soon as we begin to inquire into the aims and motives of Jesus, we pass away from our first likeness. And we now perceive the passages which we dismissed before to possess supreme importance, for it is here we find the fullest self-disclosures. These passages are to be found in our earliest record, in the deepest stratum of Evangelical tradition. In the second Gospel, no less than in the first and third, we find the Saviour announcing His own death, taking steps to secure its occurrence, and foretelling His return upon the clouds of heaven. These announcements are as well-attested as the words in which He blesses children or declares the bread and wine to be His body and blood. Those who regard the announcements as unauthentic do so because they offend their notions of probability. It is not likely, they think, that any human being, in health and strength, should have spoken in such a way of his death. It is more probable that the words should have been attributed to Him than that He should have uttered them. This view may sound plausible. We must, however; recognize that it derives no support from our records, and that it deprives a large portion of these records of any value as evidence of what the Saviour was or believed Himself to be.

If, then, we take the entire Gospel of St. Mark as our guide without first trimming it to make it accord with our notions of probability, a very different figure from that of the universal Teacher rises into view. His distinctive feature is a passionate urgency. The time for Him is short. A fiery baptism awaits Him, and He is straitened until it is accomplished. The end of the existing order is quite near. His message is contained in the sharp call to repent, to come out of a doomed world, to put off its livery, to return its wages. In uttering

this call He does incidentally teach, and put forth many fruitful sayings, many vivid illustrations. But the teaching is subsidiary to the call. He sends out some of His disciples to utter the same piercing summons, and tells them that they will not have completed their mission, and exhausted the narrow field He has prescribed for them until the end has come. They, however, return, and He deliberately sets His face towards Jerusalem, intending, not to pursue His ministry within the city, but to die there, and to offer His life as a ransom for many. He is escorted into the city by a number of Galilean pilgrims who have no notion of what is about to happen. He expels with prophetic fury the money-changers and pigeon sellers from the temple precincts. He provokes the priests by threatening forecasts of impending doom; He is arrested on some charge of having spoken disrespectfully of the temple. In the course of His examination He pronounces Himself the Messianic Son of God, and declares that His judge shall shortly see Him as such upon the clouds. He is condemned to death. The sentence is executed by the Roman authority. After hanging for six hours upon the cross, and experiencing a momentary sense of desolation, He utters a piercing cry and expires.

Such is the *Eschatological Christ*. It is the most life-like picture of the historical Jesus, as I believe, within our reach. I shall return to it shortly. Meantime, I pass to the last of my three alternatives.

(*c*) *The Mythical Christ*. A myth may be described as an idea which has silently crystallized into history. The idea has embodied itself in a supposed fact. There are incidents in the Gospels which remind us of myths. The barren fig tree which withered away under the Saviour's curse may have been the tree of the parable, planted in the ground and invested with treacherous leaves. The three hours' darkness may have been that spiritual night which falls upon men when God appears to have forsaken His world. Truths, we know, do thus crystallize into facts. Thought becomes a real occurrence. It is hardly, therefore, to be wondered at that a school of writers influenced by various motives, should have attempted to resolve the very person of the Redeemer into one or more of these

rystallized ideas. These writers, if we may judge by the cir-ulation of their books, exercise a considerable influence. Their mportance does not arise from the historical evidence they are ble to produce in support of their conclusion. They do not ndeed claim for this evidence decisive weight. They appeal o such evidence as they can find only as the best key to an therwise insoluble enigma. They tell us that we must resort o conjecture when all the proposed explanations fail. This, f I do not misjudge them, is the position of Mr. J. M. Robert-on, Prof. W. Benjamin Smith, of Tulane University, New Orleans, and Mr. Arthur Drews. (This last is an English ame, but the writer is a German, and was before the war on ne teaching staff of the Technical High School in Carlsruhe.) The books of all three writers have been widely read, both here nd on the Continent, and have called forth many refutations, mong which may be named that of Mr. F. C. Conybeare, who ill not be suspected of any partiality for traditional views.[1] The authors pronounce the Gospels, even when interpreted with ne help of the best modern scholarship, to be unintelligible and ncredible. The figure which these Gospels present has, they eclare, no semblance of real life. It is nebulous and unsub-tantial. It has no psychological coherence. Yet the Church f Christ is a fact. Christianity is a fact. How did these un-oubted realities originate? The origin presented in the Gos-els is incoherent and unsubstantial. These writers, therefore, ook elsewhere. They find that the distinctive Christian ideas re not the exclusive property of Christianity. These ideas ave a life which is by no means co-extensive with that of the Christian Church. They appear long before the Church comes nto being. They do not await the Church's sanction, nor do ney need the Church's support. We see them before the Church began, we see them disputing the ground with it during s infancy or its adolescence. The dying and the rising God, ne mystic feast, the Scapegoat, the King mocked and slain—nese and other images and pageants embody feelings and as-irations common to many rival beliefs and forms of worship. What we know as primitive Christianity is no more than these

[1] *The Historic Christ,* published for the Rationalist Press Association y Watts and Co., 1914.

ideas brought together by a process unconscious of itself into one system. The person of Christ thus becomes superfluous. The ideas, if left to themselves, would work out the visible result. The contention thus urged would of course be established if historical evidence could be brought to show that Christ never lived. Such evidence, however, these writers cannot produce. They tell us that we ought not to ask for it, that it is enough if the Christ presented either by the Church or by modern scholarship be an incredible and impossible figure.

Let me add that some modern scholars, who would dissociate themselves markedly from the writers I have named, leave us in a not very different position. Consider the conclusions reached in such a book as *The Beginnings of Christianity*, a valuable and suggestive work now in course of publication.[2] The editors are two well-known English scholars, who now hold professional positions in America. In the section of the book dealing with Christology the editors, Drs. Foakes-Jackson and Kirsopp Lake, urge that the various Messianic titles and designations with which the Gospels make us familiar cannot possibly have been used by Jesus Himself, or applied to Him by anyone else, because not one of these titles was then current, and not one of them would have conveyed the desired meaning now. The arguments of the two writers are not to my mind convincing. What I would urge, however, is that if we accept them, we are then in essentially the same position as Mr. J. M. Robertson, Prof. W. B. Smith, and Dr. Arthur Drews. The Gospels no longer possess any serious value. The figure they bring before us has no historical justification. It has no semblance of life. It is no more than a name or label for a number of heterogeneous and inconsistent conceptions. There may be in the Gospels many penetrating sayings and vivid narratives, but we can find there no man whom we can clothe with the attributes of life.

Such, then, are the three alternatives which research offers us. We have to choose between a didactic Christ, an eschatological Christ, and a mythical Christ. I do not think that it is possible to combine the three by the favourite device of taking a bit from each, and disregarding the rest. The questions

[2] Published by Macmillans in three parts. Part I is out.

we must ask are: Did Christ regard the end as quite near? Did He go up to Jerusalem with the deliberate intention of laying down His life there as a ransom? If He did, then teaching was only an incidental part of his mission, important indeed, but still subsidiary. If we lean towards the mythical Christ, then Christianity is left without a personal founder. This is our avowed position if we agree with Mr. J. M. Robertson. It is our real, although not our admitted, position, if we accept the conclusions of *The Beginnings of Christianity*.

Let me say at once that I intend to press one of these alternatives with the earnestness of full conviction. The eschatological Christ I believe to be the Christ of history. The figure of this Christ may be to us remote and strange. It may confront us with questions which we have difficulty in answering. But it is to me a sublime and arresting figure. It brings us into the presence of a greatness not of this world.. It moves the imagination and touches the deepest springs of feeling. To establish its reality, I will appeal, as the work I have mentioned—*The Beginnings of Christianity*—does, not to the Gospels, but to the earliest believers. Let us look at these believers and observe the characteristics which separated them from the surrounding world, first from Jews and subsequently from Gentiles. We shall then be in a position to consider whether there is anything in the Gospels which enables us to account for these characteristics. Looking at the stream, we shall be able to judge of the nature of its source.

The most arresting feature of the primitive Church is to me its isolation. For a few months the Christians of Jerusalem did remain hardly distinguishable from the other Jews within the city. Then the cleavage began and widened with each year that followed. Henceforth Jew and Christian stood apart as bitter antagonists. When the Gospel moved away from its first home, the separation from the Gentile world was equally marked. I need only reproduce a few sentences from the epistle in which some writer unknown describes the Church as he found it probably about 150 A.D.[3] He tells us that:

> 'While the existence of Christians is on earth, their citizenship is in heaven,' that 'every foreign country is a fatherland to them and

[3] Ep. to *Diognetus*. Lightfoot's *Apostolic Fathers*, one vol. ed., p. 505.

> every fatherland is foreign,' that 'war is waged against them as aliens by the Jews, and persecution is carried on against them by the Greeks,' and that 'while they have their abode in the world, they are not of the world.'

These sentences, abundantly corroborated from other sources, show us the isolation of the primitive Christian Society, its detachment from its surrounding environment.

Our next step is to observe that it was in the seclusion thus produced the foundations of distinctive Christian faith were laid. The new values were then settled. The new measures were brought into use. There is nothing startling in this. The detachment of the first Church was an essential condition for the rise of Christian faith and the formation of the distinctively Christian temper. It was there the Church learnt her indispensable first lessons. It was there she perceived that the promised Kingdom of God must needs be a spiritual, and not a material entity, that the return of the vanished Master must be a spiritual illumination and not an external pageant. Before such truths could be perceived, the wheels of the world's traffic must needs be stopped and the routine of daily life broken. The doors had to be shut in the streets before the soul could pray to the Father in secret.

The Acts and Epistles explain at once this detachment. The primitive disciples were convinced that the end of all things was at hand. They believed the night to be far spent and the day to be near. The expectation was to them joyous and not grievous, because the end would be a new beginning when, whether in the body or out of the body they could not tell, they would again see the Lord and be for ever with Him.

Is there, then, anything in the Gospels to give rise to these beliefs, and produce this pregnant separation? No moral teaching could have effected such a result. The object of moral teaching is to make life in the world more lovely, and not to stop it. Nor would the Resurrection alone have brought it about. I should indeed doubt whether the disciples would even have had faith sufficient to enable them to see the Master in His glorified life if He had not led them to expect such a

re-appearance. Many doubted as it was. Would not all have doubted without some previous preparation?

These facts are enough to suggest that Christ Himself must have kindled the hope of His return, and with this hope have called the disciples imperatively away from the existing world. So the Gospels tell us that He did, that His ministry had, as its centre or its fulcrum, the announcement that the Kingdom of God was at hand. It is to me incredible that He should have meant by this announcement only that the sovereignty of God was about to re-assert itself, that some important change was about to take place in the ethical notions of mankind.[4] What would have been the use of making such an announcement to His simple listeners? It is not in this way that multitudes are stirred, as the Galilean pilgrims were when they accompanied Him into the city with their Hosannas. He told His disciples that some of them would not see death until the kingdom had come. Do we really think that He meant no more than that they would live to see the first Christian Pentecost? He made a similar declaration to the High Priest, representing His death to be only an incident in the accomplishment of His purpose. What are we to make of these utterances? If we say that the Saviour never spoke such words, we do so only because they offend our notions of probability, and then the expectation of the imminence of the end among the first Christians becomes inexplicable. It hangs in the air and has no foundation. I consequently accept these passages at their full literal values. I believe them to mean exactly what they say.

But then there rises up what may seem an insurmountable difficulty. Was He who spoke as never man spoke a deluded prophet? I use the expression, although it is not one which I should myself choose, suggesting as it does credulity or weak-

[4] In the *Beginnings of Christianity*, p. 288, the Editors thus describe 'the impression which the preaching of Jesus probably made on one of His hearers in Galilee outside the intimate circle of the Twelve': 'He tells us that the New Age is close at hand in which God's Sovereignty will be supreme. He warns us to repent that we may have life in the Coming Age and explains the nature of God's Sovereignty. He is a prophet, and unlike the scribes, he does not appeal to tradition, but he does not talk about Himself.'

ness of mind. Instead of quarrelling with the phrase, I will at once admit that the mind of Christ moved along the lines traced by His age and country. I do not see how any other mental structure would have made it possible for Him to fulfil His mission, or indeed would have been consistent with humanity. If He had thought and spoken according to the forms of any subsequent age, He would have been unintelligible to His own age. Moreover the Gospels make it clear that He claimed no knowledge of the time of any future event. If the future had been present to Him, He could have felt neither surprise nor anger, nor disappointment, and we know that these and other like feelings which imply suspense or uncertainty were familiar to Him.

Instead of coming, then, to the Gospels, and finding there the figure we have determined we must find, we open our eyes to the figure we there see. We bow before a greatness which we are not in a position to measure. We do not allow ourselves to be frightened by features startling to us, or by psychological difficulties. We take the place of pupils in the presence of a master. We do not prescribe to God how He shall accomplish His designs. We observe how He has accomplished them.

A personage, full of compassion with men, but following a solitary pathway, rises before us. His central message is a summons to leave the grooves of tradition and current usage in the presence of an impending convulsion. Many of His utterances are coloured by the imminence of radical, searching change. He does not formulate laws for coming generations. He sees the immediate approach of a new heaven and a new earth. He indicates in simple words the nature of the new order and the characteristics of those who shall find a place in it. It stands in sharp antithesis to the world which now is. Current values will then be worthless. Present prosperity is the mark of failure, present failure is the promise of greatness. The first shall be last and the last first. They that mourn shall be comforted. They that are persecuted shall rejoice. The test is not what a man does, but what he is. If the treasure is in the better world, the heart will follow the treasure. No

mere outward change will suffice. No mere profession will in any wise avail. A man may give all his goods to feed the poor, and yet he may lack the one thing needful. He may make fervent professions while his heart remains cold. No human observer can distinguish the false coin from the true. But God cannot be deceived. Uttering this searching call to repentance, Jesus gathered round Him a number of intimate disciples, and sent them into the surrounding villages to repeat His announcement and its consequent summons. Suddenly, and apparently at the height of popularity, He abandons the scene of His previous activity, and sets His face towards the city, where prophets must die, resolved there to lay down His life as a ransom for many. Such a resolution presented to Him no terrors. He had declared that bodily life possessed a relative and not an absolute value, that to part with it might be gain and not loss. He found in the city the death He sought. On the evening before he suffered, He joined with His disciples in a feast in which He pronounced the wine on the table to be the blood of a new covenant to which He was about to affix His mark. He bound them to Himself and to one another in the closest fellowship, and told them that they would not again drink wine together until they should drink the better wine of the heavenly feast. The death of violence He had invited came. His assurance trembled, wavered, both in the garden and upon the cross, but though heart and flesh failed, God remained His strength and His eternal portion.

The disciples, after a brief prostration, became convinced that He still lived, and that His work would receive the crown of consummation within a brief interval. They went forth, even as He had done, to tell the world that it was high time to awake out of sleep, that the crucified Jesus would speedily return as the evident Messiah. To Jews they said: 'This is the Christ you long for, but whom you have misconceived. His death was not, as you think, a defeat and a shame. It was an offering well pleasing to God. No one took His life from Him; He laid it down of Himself.' They entreated Gentiles, led astray by the moral confusions of an obtrusive idolatry, to turn from idols to the service of the living God, and to wait for His Son from heaven.

Responding to these calls the Society came into being disclosed to us in the *Epistle to Diognetus*, a Society to which every foreign country was a fatherland and every fatherland was foreign, which had its abode in the world, but yet was not of the world. Its members were released from the pressure of earthly cares, the obsession of earthly interests. In this detachment the distinctive Christian values were settled. Faith, hope and love shone as stars of the first magnitude. The disciples found in spiritual experience the kingdom which they had at first pictured as something exclusively future. They owned the spiritual presence of Christ in their midst, while they continued to look for His future bodily advent. All this took place in the stillness created by the call of Christ to come out of the doomed world. But the claims of this world re-asserted themselves. The routine broken for a short space was resumed, and the Church became an institution for regulating the conduct of men in the very world from which it had at first called them away. In the pursuance of this task it has too often—to our shame be it confessed—accommodated itself to the world's standards and practised the world's diplomacies. We must now, taught by adversity, go back to the fresh springs of our faith. 'Before I was troubled I went wrong, but now have I kept Thy word.' I do not undervalue the power of organization to remedy such defects as organization can reach. The call of Christ will, however, remain what it has always been, essentially a call to the individual soul. We must not be afraid of drastic change. We must have done with half-measures and face the deep problems by which we are confronted. The world can only be saved by men who will in some real sense lose their lives with Christ and with Him find them. If we really look upon Him as He was, we may hope for some repetition of the apostle's experience:

> 'We all, with unveiled face, reflecting as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image even as from the Lord the Spirit.'

AN EXPERIMENT IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.

By the Headmaster of Newbury Grammar School.

THE scheme framed by the Board of Education, under which my school is administered, is emphatic to provide that 'instruction in the Christian faith' shall be given to all pupils in accordance with regulations to be made from time to time by the governors of the school. A further clause in the same scheme insists with equal emphasis that no person shall be disqualified from acting as a governor because he attends or does not attend any place of public worship, or adheres or does not adhere to any particular religious creed. There is also what is ordinarily known as the conscience clause, whereby any boy may, for adequate reasons, be withdrawn by his parents from the religious teaching. Thus have the authorities cheerfully made the best of both worlds, standing with an impartial foot in each.

Up to the present time my governors have refrained from exercising the power granted them under the first clause quoted, and have been content to leave the religious teaching entirely in the hands of the headmaster. And the purpose of this paper is to describe concisely and 'indifferently' the manner in which we carry out here the definite enactment of the scheme in this particular instance.

But a word or two of preface is perhaps necessary. We have many boys in the school and they, or rather their parents, profess many creeds. I have not taken the trouble to count up precisely how many, nor to sort out the boys into their various 'religious' compartments. All I know is that among them is, or has been, at some time represented almost every creed that is held in the British Isles. We have now in our community Anglicans, Roman Catholics, Jews, Congregationalists, Methodists, Presbyterians, Unitarians, Quakers, Plymouth Brethren, Christian Scientists and Theosophists, as well as a certain number whose parents prefer not to subscribe to any particular formulary. And we have had adherents to the orthodox Greek Church and to the 'Latter-day Saints.'

In the course of eighteen years, so far as my memory serves me, only two boys have ever been withdrawn from the religious instruction. These two boys both belonged to the Roman Catholic Church, but it is important to insist that there have been others, not a few, of that creed who have come regularly to the religious lesson. This state of affairs, which on the face of it seems satisfactory, is due, say some of my critics, to the vagueness of the teaching. That is, of course, possible, but it would be fair, I think, to retort that acquiescence in loose and vague instruction in so vital a subject argues that the tenacity with which the parents cling to their individual faiths has been somewhat exaggerated. Neither does it seem to justify that outcry for the parents' rights which is heard so often from so many controversialists.

Anyhow, the vagueness or otherwise of the instruction can perhaps be more precisely estimated by those who have the patience to read the following brief description of our methods. Each schoolday opens with a short service. First in the order of the service comes a lesson chosen and read by one of the school prefects, who holds office for a week at a time. For the proper appreciation of this point it is well to note here that the prefects are chosen not by the headmaster or the staff, but by the boys in the Sixth Form. Naturally they are almost always taken from the Sixth Form, but there is no rule limiting the selection. To return to the lesson. Absolute freedom of choice is granted to the reader. He may take his lesson from any book sacred or profane. The subject may be exactly what he likes it to be. The only proviso or, rather, for a weaker term is more applicable, the only suggestion made is that there shall be, if possible, a sort of connecting thread to fasten together, however loosely, all the extracts chosen for any particular week. So it comes about that the lesson may, but need not, be taken from the Old or New Testaments. Very often it is so taken, and perhaps it is not surprising to learn that the favourite book is the Gospel of St. John. But extracts are by no means infrequently chosen from a dialogue of Plato—in an English translation of course—from one of the Great English classics such as Milton, Sir Thomas Browne, Carlyle, Ruskin, or more modern writers like R. L. Stevenson or Ed-

ward Carpenter. Occasionally even the storehouse of ancient India is drawn upon, and excerpts from the Chinese philosopher, Lao-tse, have been read. Again, such an anthology as Robert Bridges' *The Spirit of Man* affords an almost inexhaustible quarry. It is very important to realize that no censorship is exercised over the passages chosen. Criticism there certainly is, and it might be severe if an unsuitable or undignified passage were read; but it may be truly asserted that the most severe criticism would come from the schoolfellows of the reader. And on that point I may simply say that during the seven or eight years that this sort of lesson has been read, no really unsuitable passage has been chosen. Very often indeed surprising delicacy and appropriateness has been shown in the selection. I shall give just one instance later, but I prefer here simply to state the fact without comment and pass on.

After the lesson has been read a hymn, the spirit of which is in harmony with the teaching of the lesson, is chosen by the same prefect from the school hymn book, and sung by the whole school. The collection of hymns for this book was made jointly by the staff and the elder boys. Many of the well-known hymns, long endeared by old association, are included, but others have been gathered from other sources and some of the greater poets like Browning, Tennyson, as well as minor lights like Emerson and Christina Rossetti are represented in it. After the singing of the hymn the Lord's Prayer is read by the Headmaster, and the pupils disperse to their classrooms. So much for the service, to which it may be freely admitted all boys do not pay equal attention, and it is probable that the younger pupils only get a blurred impression of the lesson which it is intended to convey. To their conscious minds there is probably very little added, but to their subconsciousness, I hope, but dare not assert, a great deal.

But this is not religious teaching within the meaning of the scheme, nor definite instruction in the Christian faith. Well, I am not sure; but anyhow, we do comply with the letter by providing a special period for each form in each week marked off and set down for religious teaching. A period, I may say, amounts usually to fifty minutes. To carry out this teaching adequately, a syllabus is drawn up at the beginning of each

school year detailing the books of the Bible to be used in each form throughout that year. The idea at the back of the syllabus is that each boy in his progress through the school shall gain some insight into the growth of the religious spirit in the experience of one particular people. Consequently in the lower forms one or more of the 'historical' books of the Old Testament (with many omissions) is read. In the middle of the school the period is given to the reading of one of the Synoptic Gospels, while in the Sixth Form an attempt is made to understand the philosophical outlook of St. John or of one of the Pauline Epistles. Some opportunity is also given to realize the 'historical' growth of Christianity through the world. But of course the syllabus hardly matters. What is important is the spirit in which it is treated. And this can best be described negatively. What is aimed at is not dogmatic teaching but open discussion running through the whole class. No attempt is made to force any point of view or to insist on any definite lesson, and the teacher is careful not to inflict his own personal opinion on the pupil or indeed the opinions of any man or body of men. Of course he can and does express it at times, but so far as possible the idea is that the book can convey its own lesson. And in the Sixth Form particularly, where the average age is seventeen years, the discussion often ranges over a very wide ground and is absolutely frank and open. Not only the teaching of the Christian religion, but the attitude to life of other peoples and other religions is discussed. And here the help of a good library, which has gradually been built up and which contains the chief 'religious' books of the world, is invaluable. Boys are encouraged to ask questions. Not all of them do, but the opportunity is taken by the majority some time or other, and no opinion, however crude and childish it may seem, is treated with scorn or contempt. Of course the discussion often splashes over into other periods, and no stern decree enforces too rigidly the sacredness of the time-table. So to a certain extent we do guard against the worst results of that fatal policy of keeping the religious teaching or, as I prefer to call it, the religious 'learning' in logic-tight and emotion-tight compartments.

Such is a brief and bald description of our system. I have

purposely refrained from seeking to appraise its value or estimate its results. Frankly, I do not know what they are. I am content to leave the issue to the slow and silent influence of time. Here more perhaps than in any other part of the school life surely the seed should be allowed to grow secretly.

But I will make one exception and give one 'result' which will, I think, encourage us to continue in the same path.

An attack was made some time ago on the religious training in the school as not being definitely Christian. The attack was doubtless inspired by worthy motives, and was based on a misunderstanding. However there arose, as a consequence, a great storm of indignation in the school both among the members of the staff and the elder boys, and the disturbance spread to the old boys and to other individuals outside the actual school. Considerable heat was engendered, the feeling threatened to be strong, and violent expressions were for a time too frequently employed. But on the second morning after the attack, when the waves of feeling were still high and the atmosphere electrical, the prefect for the week took his place at the reading desk and read a lesson which I am going to transcribe here. Again I must insist that the choice of the reader is quite unfettered.

> 'There is a spirit, which I feel, that delights to do no evil nor to revenge any wrong, but delights to endure all things, in hope to enjoy its own in the end. Its hope is to outlive all wrath and contention, and to weary out all exaltation and cruelty or whatever is of a nature contrary to itself. It sees to the end of all temptations: as it bears no evil in itself, so it conceives none in thought to any other: if it be betrayed, it bears it; for its ground and spring is the mercies and forgiveness of God. Its crown is meekness, its life is everlasting love unfeigned, and it takes its kingdom with entreaty and not with contention, and keeps it by lowliness of mind. In God alone it can rejoice, though none else regard it or can own its life. It is conceived in sorrow and brought forth without any to pity it; nor doth it murmur at grief and oppression. It never rejoiceth but through sufferings, for with the world's joy it is murdered. I found it alone, being forsaken: I have fellowship therein with them who lived in dens and desolate places in the earth; who through death obtained their resurrection and eternal holy life.'

This passage came from the last testament of James Naylor, a Quaker saint of the seventeenth century, and was found by the reader in *The Spirit of Man*, the beautiful anthology edited in the height of the war-fever by Robert Bridges.

E. Sharwood Smith.

THE CHURCH ASSEMBLY

A Sketch from the Gallery.

I LOOKED down from the gallery of the Great Hall of the Church House on January 31st, 1921, and surveyed the murmuring throng of clergy and laity just before the Church Assembly was opened by the Primate.

It was a remarkable sight, and one to be remembered. His Grace struck a note of devotion which at once obtained its proper response. The Lord's Prayer was said by all standing. The Primate followed with a prayer for help and enlightenment. The same order was preserved daily, with the addition of the singing of the *Veni Creator*, accompanied by the organ, a very beautiful and stirring thing to hear sung with immense power and heart by several hundreds of men's voices.

The Great Hall is a very long chamber and though stately, with seven large windows on each side and one large window at the west end, is much too high to possess good acoustic properties, and this defect became more and more obvious as the discussions developed. No doubt the arrangement of the seats rendered it tolerable, but complaints were rife throughout. The Archbishop's chair and low dais occupied nearly the centre of the hall longitudinally, just escaping the public gallery overhead. Next the Primate sat the Secretary of the Assembly, Sir P. Wilbraham, and Lord Parmoor. In front and at the sides were tables for the Press. The floor space was fairly evenly divided between the House of Clergy and the House of Laymen. The bishops sat in long rows opposite the chair, and the other dignitaries and clergy—amongst whom I recognised Dean Rashdall—occupied seats transversely placed. The House of Laymen was ranged in long lines behind the bishops, and overflowed like the clergy into transverse seats down to the entrance door. I could not count at any time more than a score of women present, though some forty had been elected. The house was dominantly male, and it seemed to me that the clerical element predominated. Under the side galleries, which were open to the general public, the walls are

pierced with lancet windows and hung with engravings of celebrated ecclesiastics. So much for the setting of the Assembly —an historic sight indeed, and full of significance for the future.

And what of the tone and temper of this assemblage of English Churchmen gathered together to transact Church business? I have had experience of representative meetings of all kinds of Britons, from Poor Law Guardians, County and Town Councils up to the Houses of Parliament, and they all shared the same characteristics with this Assembly—seriousness of purpose and attention to business, the desire to get at the facts and to the bottom of things, the dislike of great lengthiness of speech, an eager desire to get away as soon as points were settled, and the sooner the better. It was a gathering composed mainly of elderly and middle-aged people. This was evident from the galleries in the great number of grey-haired and shining heads that dotted the benches below. There were of course younger men present, and more will inevitably come in the future, but the sober-sided section of the Church of England predominated. The League of Youth had not yet arrived.

Throughout the sessions the proceedings were well ordered and methodical. Now and then there were slight hitches, but they were quickly rectified and very good humouredly. The Primate, as chairman, displayed great ability and firmness in directing, managing, and influencing, quite legitimately, the work of the Assembly. His quickness of mind and decision are remarkable, and were thoroughly appreciated. All present acknowledged this and displayed great confidence and goodwill in his decisions. Day after day I found myself admiring more and more the statesmanlike attitude which characterized his chairmanship.

One of the most interesting things to observe in the Assembly was the attitude of the three bodies which are conjoined in its deliberations. Of the Bench of Bishops one can say that with few exceptions they remained mainly as audience. The Archbishop of York was one remarkable exception. He has a fine voice and uses it to perfection. *O si sic omnes!* On more than one occasion he seemed better able than any one else to clear up difficulties and make the way plain, and his advice

was always fair and moderate and businesslike. The Bishop of Manchester also was prominent, and spoke with point. The Bishop of Durham was a good deal in evidence and is always listened to, but not always followed. He has now and then the note of passion in his voice, which gives force to his great gift of historical imagination. His mission at the Assembly was obviously to lose no opportunity of emphasizing the national character of the Church and the danger of interfering with any concrete survival and evidence of that character. Hence his earnest and clear-cut plea for the retention of the vestry and the churchwardens as representatives of the whole parish, and not merely of a single denomination within it. He insisted that, according to law, the parish church is the property of the whole Christian community of the parish.

The great body of the clergy seemed to have little to say. The laity gave the impression from the outset that they had come with open minds and, although resolved to listen to both sides, yet also resolved to protect the interests of their order. It was evident from the beginning that there was some cleavage between laity and clergy. It showed itself when Lord Wolmer moved to withdraw from the present purview of the Assembly, or postpone, all the important clauses relating to the clergy in the Parochial Councils Bill. There was a sustained growl of 'No, No,' from the lay benches. A brisk debate followed. It looked at times as if there might be something like passionate language. Sir W. Joynson-Hicks worked himself up into a fairly high oratorical temperature, and incited Lord Hugh Cecil to try and throw oil on the troubled waters. It was then that the Archbishop of York stepped in as peace-maker and proposed the amendment under which Lord Wolmer saved his face. It was a remarkable incident, because it showed the House of Laymen was not disposed to allow an ecclesiastically-minded member of their House to dictate a procedure of his own making, apparently in favour of a section of the clergy.

In every Assembly there is always a group whose knowledge of affairs and skill in debate make them natural leaders. In the Church Assembly the fact was immediately recognized. After the Primate, the pilot of the measure was Lord Parmoor

better known in parliamentary life as Sir Charles Alfred Cripps, Chancellor and Vicar-General of York, and Vicar-General for a time of Canterbury. He has an unrivalled knowledge of ecclesiastical law; is sagacious, diplomatic, and a veteran in public life. As representing the drafting Committee of the Bill, he was in all the discussions a central figure, without whom it would have been difficult to 'carry on.' Another ecclesiastical lawyer, Lord Phillimore, a prominent member of the English Church Union, was in the forefront of debate, and it was a source of considerable entertainment to the clergy to observe these two authorities engaged in pretty duels of opinion on various legal technicalities. It was after Lord Phillimore had introduced his amendment to sweep away churchwardens that Dr. Henson got in a neat retort. 'These ancient customs are merely a superstition' said the lawyer. Referring to this, the Bishop remarked, 'On the question of superstition, no one has better right to speak than the noble Lord.' Whereat the Assembly laughed loud and long. Other prominent figures amongst the laity were Lord Hugh Cecil, who was usually near the dais; his speech on the Divorce Resolution rose to a great height, and stamped him as leading the traditional party in the Church; Lord Wolmer, Mr. G. A. King, of whom more will be heard in the region of finance; Sir Lulham Pound, Bart., Mr. T. W. H. Inskip, K.C., M.P., a very sturdy debater and a good lawyer; and Major F. D. Birchall, M.P., stand out prominently among the laity. The intervention of the Marquess of Hartington attracted considerable interest. In appearance and manner he was the exact opposite of the last bearer of that title.

I was impressed by the powers of speech displayed in the Assembly. There was no rhetoric and not much eloquence, except at rare moments. Dull and dreary speakers were quickly greeted with loud cries of 'Divide, Divide.'

The legislative work of the Assembly culminated when the Parochial Church Councils' Bill was committed for the purpose of making necessary alterations in order to be submitted to the Assembly next day.

A resolution against any increase of the grounds on which a divorce might be granted was passed, but the Bishop of Dur-

ham and Dean Rashdall both expressed an opinion that it was unfortunate the subject had been brought before the Assembly, having regard to the conflict of opinion amongst theologians, and the different practices in the Eastern and other Churches.

The attention paid to the Assembly's proceedings by the London daily Press was certainly disappointing. The *Morning Post* gave a column of space daily to a report of the meetings, and *The Times* came next. The *Daily Telegraph* and the *Daily Chronicle* reported nothing at all. The *Daily News* and the *Daily Mail* followed their example. It is clear that the National Assembly has no publicity department. It is worth the consideration of the competent committee which manage the Assembly's affairs whether they can afford to ignore the fact that the Press has largely superseded the pulpit, and that the silence of the one is disadvantageous to the influence of the other.

P.H.B.

THE FUTURE STATE*

By the Rev. C. W. Emmet, B.D., Fellow of University College; Vice-Principal of Ripon Hall, Oxford.

He is not the God of the dead, but of the living; for all live unto Him.—Luke, xx, 38.

ALL Saints' Day has perhaps renewed in the minds of some of us questions and perplexities with regard to the way we may reasonably think of the departed. The problem is, indeed, constantly thrust upon us in one form or another. Are we to think of them as 'souls beneath the altar,' disembodied spirits waiting for a future resurrection and a final judgment? Are they in a purgatory of suffering in which the penalties for forgiven sin are being worked out, or are they in a state of joyous activity, which is also one of purification, growth and enhancement? Is their personality complete, clothed already with what we speak of as the spiritual body?

If we attempt to consider this problem to-day, it will be understood that we are not primarily discussing the arguments

* A Sermon preached before the University of Oxford on November 7th, 1920.

for immortality. For the purpose before us we may take it for granted and go on to consider its conditions. Sometimes, indeed, it is a valuable method of apologetic to assume a doctrine to be true and then show it to be reasonable and intelligible.

It is well to remind ourselves at the outset of the intrinsic difficulties of the subject. The teaching of the New Testament, and in particular of our Lord, though quite decisive as to the main fact has, as we know, very little to tell us of details. Where it does seem to be more definite, it is of necessity 'picture thinking,' and much of our perplexity arises from the fact that the particular pictures used and the scheme which lies behind them belong to a view of the world which in most other subjects we have left behind. Christian thought took over this scheme introducing, as we shall see, modifications and additions which have really made it almost unintelligible. In the words of Dr. Charles:

> 'The eschatology of the nation is always the last part of its religion, to experience the transforming power of new ideas and facts.'

This was true of Israel in various periods of its religious development; it is not less true of the Christian Church.

What, then, is the background which lies behind the pictures of the future found in the New Testament, pictures which were derived in almost every detail from Apocalyptic? They presuppose a universe which is quite manageable both in its extent and duration. The earth is the centre of the visible world, with heaven, or a series of heavens, above it, peopled by spiritual beings who pass up and down in a quite literal sense. This universe had its origin in a definite act of creation at a point of time not very far distant. This act may have been split up into stages, as in Gen. i, but it was not thought of as a process of gradual evolution. The point is that the end was conceived of on the same principles as the beginning. It was regarded as near, very near. History could be divided into a week of days, each of 1,000 years, and the sixth of these days was drawing to its close, ushering in the final Sabbath. And the end would come, as the beginning came, by a single catastrophic act of God at a definite point of time. It would be preceded by social and natural convulsions—wars, famine, pestilence, the darkening of the sun, the falling of the stars, the shrivelling of the firmament—and then would appear the reve-

lation of the new heaven and earth, the new age whether here or in heaven itself. The whole attention was concentrated on this approaching judgment, and the manifestation of what we may call the Messianic Kingdom. The important thing was that men should be qualified to enter into it. And it was thought of primarily in its effect on the nation as a unit, and on the generation alive at its coming. Generally speaking, past generations were strangely ignored.

It follows that comparatively little interest was taken in the condition of the departed after death, in what we have come to call the intermediate state. There was indeed such a state, and it was depicted in various ways; but it was only quite temporary, and entirely subordinate to the privileges of the kingdom which was so soon to be revealed. In IV Es., xiii, 24, it is held that, in spite of the horrors of the Messianic woes, which were to usher in the kingdom, those who survive till its coming are more blessed than those who have died. So in the Pauline Epistles we hear practically nothing of previous generations who have passed away. The problem which exercised men's minds was of the small number of Christians who might die before the Parousia. We see this clearly in I Th., iv, 13 *ff*. The survivors are not to sorrow as men without hope for those who die; they will not forfeit their share in the kingdom on account of their premature death. They are now asleep, but soon the Lord will appear and bring them with Him; their bodies shall rise (apparently to be united with the descending souls), and they and the survivors will be united with Him in the new age. Nothing is said about sinners or unbelievers. It is surely obvious that this passage implies a Messianic Kingdom upon earth. For if the Thessalonians interpreted the future in terms of a bliss in heaven in our sense, into which men normally passed at death, why should they have been troubled about believers who died, in the fear that they should miss something that the survivors would enjoy? That is to say the passage is not primarily a discussion about 'the future life' in our sense, about the state into which we enter after death. The great thing is what will happen at the Parousia.

We may notice that we have here the chief explanation of the origin of the belief in a general bodily resurrection of the

righteous. As we have seen, curiously little interest was taken in past generations, but they could not be entirely ignored. And so the belief arose (first in *Daniel*) that the righteous should rise to receive their bodies, or new bodies, in order to enjoy the Messianic Kingdom, whether on earth or in heaven. Meanwhile it was held that they were waiting, asleep or disembodied, living a kind of half-life until they received their garments of light, their spiritual bodies. In *Revelation* they are the souls beneath the altar, crying 'how long?' But as a whole the state of the dead is not a pressing problem to the New Testament writers, simply because it is temporary and affects only a minority of believers.

It would of course be misleading to suggest that the scheme we have sketched was clear-cut and uniform. There are many modifications and variations, both in the Apocalyptic books and in the New Testament. In particular we note that, as time went on, St. Paul seems to have shrunk from the idea of a period of waiting after death, during which the soul should be 'naked,' and came to teach that the tabernacle or garment from heaven, the spiritual body, was to be received immediately after death. Whilst in I *Thess.* the dead may hope to be 'with the Lord' after His coming, in II *Corinthians* and *Philippians* to die is to be with Him at once. But in spite of modifications, this is the kind of programme which lies behind the detailed eschatological pictures of the New Testament.

It is, as we know, a grave question how far it was shared by our Lord Himself. It can, I think, be shown that even if He did not altogether reject this feature of contemporary belief, He adopted it with much reserve and many qualifications, and that it occupied only a subordinate place in His teaching. But it is not necessary for the purpose in hand to discuss this question. For Christian theology, and in particular the popular view, which always tends to take its own line in matters relating to the future, did not distinguish the different elements, or attempt to go behind the record as it stands. It took over the general scheme, and very often attached the chief value to those external Apocalyptic details which are least satisfactory.

It took over the scheme, but it found it very difficult to manipulate. For its pivot was, as we have seen, the near approach of the judgment, and when this did not come it was of necessity thrust further and further away into the future. The belief in a kingdom on earth disappeared, and the kingdom itself became identified with the heavenly state to be attained after death. Generation after generation of believers passed away: the period of waiting became longer and longer, and the actual fate and condition of the dead became of increasing importance. The intermediate state no longer affected only a few for a short time. But an indefinitely prolonged term of waiting for a judgment and a final entry into bliss or woe raised new problems and really dislocated the scheme.

(*a*) A belief grew up in an individual judgment at death, at which each one's destiny was decided, the sentence being, partially at least, carried into execution at once. But this made the final general judgment otiose; it became only the statutory and public endorsement of a sentence pronounced and acted upon long ago.

(*b*) The postponement of the Resurrection also created a difficulty. Whatever our conception of the meaning of the 'spiritual body' and its relation to the body which has decayed in the grave, we agree that it stands for the fullness of personality. Can we conceive of those who have died in the Lord as living through ever-lengthening ages a 'half-life,' naked and still waiting for the tabernacle from heaven? Yet, in spite of II Cor., v, this has been the traditional and, I believe, the strictly orthodox, view.

> 'On the Resurrection morning
> Soul and body meet again' . . .
> 'Here awhile they must be parted
> And the flesh its Sabbath keep,
> Waiting in a holy stillness
> Wrapt in sleep.'

In our own Burial Service we are bidden to find our hope and comfort in a 'general Resurrection at the last day,' but surely it is not this which really comes home to us so much as the truth that 'the spirits of them that depart hence in the Lord' live now with God, and that 'the souls of the faithful'

are already 'in joy and felicity.' This implies that they are already living a fuller and richer life than here, not a truncated half-life. But the two views are inconsistently retained side by side. If, apart from any dogmatic belief which we feel compelled to hold, we ask ourselves what is our most vital conviction, is it not that those we have loved now live unto God, growing to perfection in the ampler day?

In some of the phrases just used we have been reminded that there is in the New Testament another strain of thought beside the Apocalyptic. It may be less clear-cut and defined, even sometimes a little elusive, but we feel that it goes far deeper. We find it in St. Paul's later view of death as a departing to be with Christ; we find it in Johannine teaching of eternal life as knowing God, a present relation begun now and capable of indefinite perfection hereafter; we find it above all, as we should expect, in the teaching of our Lord Himself. When asked about the Resurrection He does not lay the stress or base His argument upon some future assize and an ultimate coming together of soul and body, but on the profound truth that God is the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob. This is not a verbal quibble from *Exodus;* the meaning is that the relationship implied when we can say of the Eternal, 'He is my God,' is in its nature independent of death: 'all live unto Him' now and always.

And so the phrases which haunt us, which express our deepest longings, in which we catch the authentic music of the Bible and our own Authorised Version, are such as these:

> 'The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and there shall no torment touch them.'
>
> 'In my Father's house are many mansions; I go to prepare a place for you.'
>
> 'Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple.'
>
> 'They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them nor any heat; for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them and lead them unto living fountains of water, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.'

These are independent of any Apocalyptic scheme; they do not express the hope for some distant Resurrection and judgment day, receding ever further into an unknown future, but a relationship begun here and growing to fuller completeness as we pass through the doors of death.

For this new life is not static; it must be one of progress. Purgatory rightly interpreted is almost a necessity of thought. The mediaeval purgatory was mainly one of expiation of the punishment of sins already forgiven, and we shall not be attracted by the idea of a ledger-account of a fixed quantity of penal suffering which may be shortened by various devices. But we shall hardly doubt that even the soul, which has made much progress here, must pass through an experience of further growth and purification, which may involve some pain, even though it be a 'sweet pain.' And the soul whose eyes are still blind to the light must awaken to the facts of self, and sin, and God, and must endure the discipline which is in some sense 'hell,' though with the quite crucial distinction that its suffering is neither unending nor without its divine purpose of hope.

Here it may be thought we shall find room after all for our Apocalyptic 'Last Day.' For may we not say that to us the 'Last Day' marks the end of the process of discipline and development, when the soul passes from its purgatory or paradise to its heaven? But again there is an obvious difficulty. A universal 'Last Day' in this sense would imply that all reach their perfection at the same time. Are your prehistoric man, your ancient Egyptian, your Christian believer of the first or the nineteenth century, those who die but a few hours before the end, all to attain their final climax of growth at the same moment? And if it be said that this is to apply our ideas of time to a state often presumed to be timeless, we must reply that if we are talking about growth and change, followed by a Great Day at a particular moment which can be dated A.D. so and so, we are thinking in terms of time and cannot escape from a real difficulty by suggesting that time does not apply.

If it be necessary to distinguish heaven from a paradise of growth, we may regard it as the final goal of perfection and nearness to God, beyond which further progress is impossible, the vanishing point of an infinite series, though such a conception has its difficulties. But it cannot reasonably be supposed that this heaven is reached by all at the same moment. We cannot, indeed, tacitly drop the Apocalyptic and New Testament conception of the nearness of the end and the set-

ting in which it comes, and retain the rest of the belief itself as literal and prosaic fact.

It is obvious that in speaking of the final goal of progress we pass to regions where thought must confess itself baffled. But it is not our purpose to produce an alternative scheme of the future, so much as to suggest that we need not allow ourselves to be hampered and confused by the particular Apocalyptic scheme which Christianity inherited from Judaism (perhaps ultimately from Persia), and which later thought has vainly tried to adapt to a changed conception of the world. Apocalyptic did its right work; it enshrined under its figures permanent religious truths, but in some cases at least these truths are better expressed for our generation in a quite different phraseology.

We have seen that in thinking of our dead we ask to be assured of a growing nearness to God and to Christ, of a fuller and richer life than this, perhaps above all of a life whose main aim shall be not merely the purification and ennobling of the individual self but the continued service of its fellows. Can Christianity, can the New Testament, give us any valid assurance of these things? I dare to answer with an unhesitating 'Yes,' if we have the courage to pass beyond the letter of isolated texts, beyond the form of the pictures, to the basic principles of Christ's teaching. In spite of much that has been said of late, we need not be afraid to see in the Fatherhood of God the heart of His message and the most original element in His teaching. It does not really matter that we are referred to this or that phrase in the Old Testament, in the Apocalyptic or Rabbinic writings. Men may have learnt before this to call God 'Father,' but how much else? Look at the string of other titles, the varieties of address used almost promiscuously. Christ ignored all these and concentrated absolutely on the one. It was not merely a change of emphasis; it was a new conception in its purity, its magnificent consistency. Here, surely, is the highest originality.

Let us look at the almost inevitable corollaries. The Father of men cannot cease to be a Father, because of the incident of death. You cannot doubt that He is calling His children ever nearer to Himself, that He has a high purpose

for each which He will not readily abandon. Even the best make so little progress towards that purpose here, that it must continue hereafter. What advance has been made has been by slow growth, not by sudden magical transformation; the same principle must hold after death.

> 'Beloved, now are we children of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be. We know that if He shall be manifested we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.'

But if God's dealings here are any guide to His dealings with us hereafter, so profound a change cannot take place in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, whether at a last trump or at death; it must be the work of ages of growth.

(*b*) Individuality. While the Father will desire to see in His children this real likeness to Himself, He does not wish them to be mere reproductions, or copies of one another. Copies can be turned out by machinery; the life process produces personalities. If God had meant us ultimately to become mere replicas of a standard type, however magnificent, or to be merged and absorbed in an all-embracing whole, why the marvellous variety of individuality which becomes the more marked as you rise in the scale of being? Two stones, two flies, two sheep, though they have their distinctive features, are yet more like to one another than two saints or two poets. I do not believe it is mere ignorance or prejudice which makes us say that two savages are more alike than two educated Europeans. Unless, then, we preserve our individuality hereafter, the whole rich purpose of the Father for His children is stultified. And this means the persistence of individual character, individual gifts and endowments, under whatever conditions. The spiritual body stands for that which makes me myself and you yourself, not the half-baked self of the present (in the phrase of the Dean of St. Paul's), but the true self as it exists in the mind of God.

(*c*) Much the same may be said of the desire for service. So far as we can trace the Father's purpose for His children, it is precisely that we shall recognise our membership in the common family, our brotherhood, by a widening fellowship and love, by giving and receiving service. Having learnt this here in some measure and at great cost, are we to be deprived by death of all opportunity of exercising the faculty which binds

the family together and brings us nearest to the heart of the Father? 'Love never faileth,' and love must find its expression in service, joyfully given, joyfully accepted.

(*d*) And from the conception of the family comes the pregnant thought of a growing unity. It is the paradox of personality that, while in its development, it becomes more and more itself, yet it also finds itself increasingly in others. Personality is not an impervious, isolating principle. 'I in them and thou in Me, that they may be perfected into one.' And so the society of God's children may hope to become more and more one, one in Him and one with each other. Here is the underlying permanent truth in the expectation of the kingdom. A kingdom is essentially social; the Christian hope is not the salvation of the isolated individual, or of a series of individuals; it is the salvation of the whole society as a unit. It is instructive to note the swing of the pendulum in eschatological belief. It began in Old Testament times by thinking only of the salvation of the society, the nation, ignoring the individual; in Christian belief it soon swung round to an exaggerated emphasis on the salvation of the individual soul; now we are learning to redress the balance and to think of both. Neither they without us, nor we without them can look to be made perfect. And this surely carries with it the corollary that in the family of God the happiness of none can be complete till each child has been drawn within the circle of the Father's love and presence.

And so from the central fact of the Fatherhood of God, we can draw out all we need. There are indeed unsolved problems of the future life relating to the how, the when, the where. From the nature of the case they must remain unsolved. Apocalyptic attempted to solve them, and, as we have seen, its solutions, if taken at all literally, only perplex us. But this does not mean, as is often suggested, that we must fall back on a blank agnosticism. There is the other strain in the New Testament, and this satisfies all our deepest longings; we are assured of the great spiritual principles, of the value and the unfathomed possibilities of human personality, of love and the continued opportunity for the expression of love. Knowing this, do we not know all we need to know? Need we ask more?

MYSTICISM AND RATIONAL THEOLOGY

II

By the Rev. C. J. Shebbeare, M.A., Rector of Swerford, Select Preacher in the University of Oxford, 1917—1919.

LAST month we described the Mystic as one who, in seeking God, dispenses for the most part with intermediate links and channels whether of reasoning or rite.

We examined in this connection (1) the Mysticism of the pure visionary, like Sister Gertrude Mary; (2) Symbolic Mysticism: again, types of Mysticism in which, without notion of symbolism, the knowledge of God is regarded as drawn (3) from materials furnished by the senses, *e.g.*, by experience of beauty in Nature, (4) from an impression of the *stability*, rather than the beauty, of the world, (5) from the experiences of love, especially of that 'love of the brethren,' which is the theme of the Johannine Epistle. Till two or three more forms, however, of mystical experience have been considered, the series is obviously incomplete.

(6) Another type then, of mystical piety is based not so much on love, as upon respect for duty, upon reverence for the moral law, for the Spirit's accusing voice. This is the Mysticism of those who tremble at God's word.[12] There are few passages more impressive in Kant's *Moral Treatises* than the description[13] of the man whose sympathy for his fellows has been killed by his own overwhelming griefs, who yet does kindly acts without sympathy, simply because these acts are commanded one by one by the imperative of the moral law. Most men conceive their acts of duty as fulfilling a connected scheme of conduct. Between the bare notion of duty and the individual act there stands as a mediating link a general plan of work in which we take interest, ordered for the benefit of our fellow-men whom, in some measure, we love. Yet cases are pretty frequently to be found—especially in Evangelical circles—where the thought of a plan of life seems absent, where each separate duty seems to be accepted as a separate divine command, where even if

[12] Isaiah, lxvi, 5.

[13] *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*, 1 Abschnitt, p. 398.

ne reason for the duty is known it is hardly, or not at all, re-ected upon. This sense of immediate contact with the Divine aw must be counted mystical, though the mysticism is of an nusual type.

(7) Again, we may compare with this another type of reli-ious feeling which is important because, though it undoubtedly xists, it appears seldom or never to have been explicitly escribed. A modern philosopher has used the expression hat in a sense all existence is a miracle. There are some for whom, at least in some moods, the marvellousness of all exist-nce as such is not a philosophical reflection, but a matter of irect and passionate feeling. Twice in the Psalms[14] mere eing is contrasted with life. 'While I live, will I praise the ord: yea, as long as I have any being I will sing praises unto ny God.' 'I will sing unto with the Lord as long as I live: I vill praise my God while I have my being.' There are those to whom the standing wonder is not the beauty of the world, but he mere fact of its existence. For them the evidence of God s not that they live with fulness of life, but that they exist at ll. However empty of charm or of definiteness their being nay be, they still marvel at mere being itself. 'If I go down o hell—to Hades, the shadowy underworld—Thou art here.'[15] To such minds the 'darkness and light are both like.'[16] While others see God because the world seems to hem to be flooded with light; to these souls God would be qually plain in a world flooded with darkness. The dangers f such a view are obvious. A universe thus conceived may nly too readily become an Antinomian's Paradise. Yet if ome have such sensitiveness of feeling that mere existence aises in them as great a sense of wonder as other men receive rom the spectacle of order and beauty, may they not draw enuine religious knowledge from immediate contact with any bject of experience whatsoever?[17] For them, even more than or the reflective Hegelian, the stones will seem to 'cry out.' Such knowledge would be, according to our definition, mystical.

[14] Ps. cxlvi, 1. Ps. civ, 33. Prayer Book version. The sense of con-rast remains even if one makes every allowance for the effect of Hebrew arallelism. In Dr. Cheyne's translation the contrast is reduced to a inimum. [15] Ps. cxxxix, 7. [16] Ps. cxxxix, 11.

[17] *Cf.* the passage from *Saul*, quoted above. To those who find God n the clod and the stone, mere existence must seem to be a good god in tself—mere existence and reality apart from the character of what exists.

(8) We pass now to Mysticism in its most characteristic form: Mysticism which comes near to sweeping away all mediation, all distinction, all thought. Its prevailing note is the passion for unity, the weariness of all multiplicity. R. L. Stevenson rejoiced 'that the world was full of a number of things.' The mystic has the opposite feeling. The many are trivial, wearisome, unsatisfactory, ultimately unreal.

'The one remains, the many change and pass.'[18]

'Our noisy years
Seem moments in the being of the eternal silence.'[19]

Pfleiderer[20] has said of Mysticism that:

'In this God-intoxication in which self and the world are alike forgotten, the subject knows himself possessed of the highest and fullest truth, but in the undeveloped form of monotonous feeling.'

Why, it may be asked, should the mystic's feeling be monotonous? The answer is that the mystic of whom Pfleiderer is thinking, is the mystic who above all things seeks unity. Yet as a mystic he refuses to seek it in the unifying action of thought: he cannot therefore find it in what Mr. Bosanquet calls the 'Concrete Universal.'[21] But unity he must have. It remains, therefore, that he shall find it either in monotonous feeling, or in some such state as has been described as the 'reduction of his whole consciousness to a point.' With regard to monotonous feeling, we may fairly maintain that this need not be in every case an ignoble form of experience. The one feeling which plays a prominent part in Kant's moral system, pure respect for the moral law,[22] must be in a sense monotonous. The extremer type of mystic, however, seeks unity in even a more drastic form than this. His quarrel is with the finite, the limited, the dependent. That which has to be explained by something else, that which leads the mind to think, to strive onward, is for him unsatisfying. And, for him, only the satisfactory is the real. He offers, says Professor Royce,[23] a new definition of the verb 'to be.' He regards the real as 'that which satisfies.' But that which involves thinking, or any form of striving—so the mystic argues—is *ipso facto* incapable of

[18] Shelley, *Adonais*, lii.
[19] Wordsworth, Ode, *Intimations of Immortality*, &c., ix.
[20] Quoted in Appendix to Dr. Inge's Bampton Lectures.
[21] *The Principle of Individuality and Value*, p. 31.
[22] *Grundlegung*, p. 401, 402 and note; 1 abschnitt.
[23] *The World and the Individual*, p. 186 ff.

bringing satisfaction. 'Therefore,' he advises, 'take your experience as it stands. It is one; it has the unity we desire, as is evident from the mere fact that it is just your single experience. Cease to think; cease to strive; and immediately you are at the land whither you were journeying. In your experience, taken thus restfully in its simple immediacy, you have God. He is not far from everyone of us. "Be still, then, and know that I am God."' Here, then, we may distinguish three stages. First, the monotonous feeling—monotonous, but still definite—of Pfleiderer's definition; secondly, the quietistic stilling of all emotion and all effort; thirdly, the logical result of the mystic's complaint against mediation, finitude, multiplicity—namely, the stilling of all thought and all consciousness whatsoever. At this third stage we reach Mysticism in its extremest form. The Indian mystic compares true reality to dreamless sleep, to the jungle when the beasts are at rest, when all the illusory quarrels and differences of their waking hours cease,[24] and they find in sleep their real unity. Similar in spirit is the conclusion that God alone is real: that God is to be known as a 'point,' as a single undifferentiated unity above and beyond all description in words. 'Believe not these babblers'—so this extreme Mysticism has expressed itself—'who say that they know God: they who know Him are silent.' Such mystics would not resist the conclusion that 'nothing is real of which anything can be said.' If you tell them that their God is mere nonentity, they will answer that so it must seem to you who are in the bondage of finite desires. The real—they will assert—is known only through a 'contrast-effect';[25] that is by contrast with all that seems real to the ordinary man: and thus the absolute reality seems to him empty, just because the things which seem real to him are unreal in truth, and are therefore not to be found in it.[26]

We see, then, a number of types of experience which have this element in common, that in all there is a seeking for God, and at the same time that here men dispense with the usual chains of reasoning, the usual proofs or arguments, whether popular or philosophical, for God's existence.

[24] Royce, *op. cit.* p. 161, 162, *cf.* 148.
[25] This phrase also is Professor Royce's.
[26] *Cf.* Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Idea*, Bk. IV, closing words.

What, then, takes the place of these steps, or chains, or intermediate links? In almost every case of Mysticism there is some passionate feeling and interest, an interest that tends to govern conduct. The mind 'runs on heavenly things.' Moreover, the mind gets an assurance of the reality of its object in the connectedness, satisfactoriness, and also in the persistence and vividness of its experiences. 'One no more doubts of God,' says a character in M. Paul Bourget's *Lazarine*,[27] 'when one feels Him present, than one doubts of the sun when one warms one's self in its light.' If we ask, then, what here takes the place of our usual chains of reasoning, the answer may be given, perhaps, that in some cases it is vivid sense-perception, coupled with strong emotion, with a strong sense—say—of symbolic congruity; that in other cases it is passionate love, satisfaction, joy; that in others, again, it is a quietistic stilling of all emotion, a sense of the wearisomeness of the finite, or, it may be, a persistent sense of something that in all our experience eludes our observation, and yet is everywhere present—

> 'Some sweet strange mystery
> Of what beyond these things may lie
> And yet remain unseen.'[28]

This answer lies open to various criticisms. To begin with, we cannot, really, have a sense of God, since God cannot on any theory be an object of sense. To the mystic it may be *as if* he had touched God with his hand, but we cannot touch God with our hand in reality. 'No man hath seen God at any time': nor have we, in either of the more usual senses of the word, 'felt' Him. Thought and sense may be blended and fused in the mystic as they are not in other men, but both elements must be present.[29] In this connection there arise many questions interesting to the philosopher. We may ask, for example, whether—on the assumption that the mystic has a genuine knowledge of God, and that this knowledge is obtained by methods different from those which we ourselves employ—his knowledge rests on grounds fundamentally different from our own. Or is the difference not in the objective grounds but in a purely subjective difference of the order and method of apprehension? Or are both these phrases alike inadequate?

[27] *Lazarine*, p. 91.

[28] *Peter Bell the Third*, V, viii.

[29] In general relation to this question *cf.* Hegel, *Werke*, III, pp. 56, 57, 76. E.g. *Nichts giebt, nichts im Himmel*, &c.

These questions we need not now discuss. It is sufficient to say here that if the Mystic claim that he possesses an immediate unreasoned knowledge of God, we must admit that we all lay claim to much unreasoned knowledge in the matters of everyday life. Apart from these undemonstrated principles which are the basis of all demonstration, we can point to cases where steps of reasoning are dropped out where we might expect them to be present.[30] More generally interesting is that certitude which we all possess concerning the reality of our neighbours as conscious beings. The more we reflect upon this conviction, the less likely shall we be to regard it as the product of argument. The conviction seems to exist as clearly in an infant as in a grown man. Take again our general conviction that life is not a dream: that we are awake and sane: that Nature will be orderly in the future as it has been in the past. These cases where admittedly we have reasonable, but not fully reasoned, knowledge, are after all very similar in principle to what is claimed for the mystic. At each point we must examine the mystic's claim without prejudice, and on the merits of the individual case. If a man told us that in nature God spoke to him as clearly, as explicitly, as directly, as does his fellow man when he speaks to him in written or spoken words, we might well feel a doubt either of his sanity, or of his self-knowledge. If he told us that God spoke to him, but in a metaphorical sense, that he had a perpetual consciousness, which he could not explain nor analyse, but which he could still less deny or doubt, of God's presence and support, we might be more willing perhaps to accept his testimony.

What, then, of the relation of Mysticism in general to philosophy and theology? In the first place we cannot, from the standpoint of a Christian theology, accept Mysticism in any of its forms as *the* way to God. If Christianity *is* the way to God, then Mysticism is *not* that way. If we admit that there are not only non-Christian mystics, but also non-mystical Christians, then it seems to follow that we must contend earnestly for the recognition of the latter—of the type of mind of which Paley is a conspicuous example—within the Christian fold. The way to God, in the practical sense of those words, is through Christian repentance, through unreserved surrender of the will

[30] *Cf.* in this general connection Schopenhauer's criticisms of Euclid, *World as Will and Idea*, Vol. I, pp. 93 onwards. German paging, 85, &c.

to God's command. Such is the burden of all our practical instruction. The way to God in the speculative sense—that is to intellectual knowledge of God—must be through systematic thought. Such is the postulate of any rational theology: confirmed, too, by the Christian tradition of long ages. But in both these aspects Mysticism may be of immense value as a *special tendency within religion*, even for those who cannot accept the mystic path as simply equivalent to religion itself. The man who knows nothing of the 'contemplative life' (in the special sense), of the 'practice of the presence of God,' of the 'way of illumination,' of the 'dark night of the soul,' loses something of the full experience of religion. If the mystic tells us to close our eyes to the things of sense, this, though doubtless wrong if intended as a universal maxim—God is found rather by opening the eyes than by closing them—may well be right, if confined to particular occasions. It is sometimes maintained that the deliberate production of the mystic trance has never been the method of the mystical Christian. This assertion may admit of exceptions, but it is certainly true in the main—a fact which accords well with the essentially rational character attributed to our religion by its defenders. But though we assert that philosophical theology has the right to decide upon the claims of Mysticism or of any other experience, though our reflective reason must be the final court of appeal in all cases, we may still recognise that the mystical temperament has a high value, and is indeed one of the priceless treasures of our Christian heritage. We may compare here the relation of philosophy to poetry. It is the business of the philosopher to decide the place of poetry in human life. Yet the poet may well know more of nature than the philosopher himself. The true poet is distinguished, not merely by exuberance of fancy, but by knowledge. Similarly the philosophic theologian must judge the place of Mysticism in religion. Mystic experiences must be subject to rational reflection and to the control of the rational will. The 'spirit of the prophets' must be 'subject to the prophets.'[31] Yet, while granting the rights of reason to the full, we may still without inconsistency admit that the mystic may at some points go further than the philosophic theologian in the knowledge of that ultimate reality in which we live, and move, and have our being.

[31] I. Cor. xiv, 32.

BOOK NOTICES

THE PROBLEM OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

A new study of Marcion—the greatest and most arresting of all early heretics—is sure of welcome from students of early Christian life and thought, if it be thorough and complete. When it comes from the veteran scholar Dr. von Harnack, they will know that it will deal exhaustively with all the interesting subjects that the name of Marcion suggests. In his preface to the substantial volume that contains it, Dr. von Harnack tells us that in the year 1870 he obtained a University prize for an essay on the teaching of Marcion as shown in Tertullian's work against him; that he was bidden to revise and publish his essay; and that throughout the fifty years since he has had the subject steadily before him, though now that he produces his monograph naturally not a single sentence of the original essay remains as it was.

The book as a whole is for the special public of scholars and students, though it is about one who, as we are told, 'as a religious personality' has no rival to be compared with him from Paul to Augustine. But all the less technical pages of it are full of interest for less expert readers, and among the most interesting are some half-dozen dealing with the place the Old Testament occupies in the Churches to-day.

What Dr. von Harnack says about the importance of this question for true religion to-day will appeal, I think, to all readers of the *Modern Churchman*. It prompts, and for the most part supplies, the following remarks.

Marcion was the first Christian to realize the depth and range of the Pauline antithesis between the Law and the Gospel, between the God of the Old Testament and the God who was incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth, the Redeeming God. For him Redemption was the wonderful fact that must control all else and determine the conception of God. God was Redeemer, Saviour, of men, from all the evil and miseries of life in the world. He could not, therefore, have been the Creator of them or of such a world, though there was an element in them akin to Him. So the Old Testament had to go. Strangely, as it seems to us, Marcion was not troubled by having to jettison Psalmists and Prophets with their true piety and genuine religion. The Christ even of the prophets was the warrior King coming to save Israel. The whole collection was contaminated in his eyes.

In insisting, as he did in the middle of the second century, on making the fact of the redeeming love revealed in the life of Christ the one test of a true conception of the character of the supreme God, and in repudiating all conceptions inconsistent with this dominant characteristic, Marcion occupies a position all his own. He carried St. Paul's and St. John's main premisses to their logical conclusion; and in this sense, after our Lord Himself, he was the founder of a new religion.

No historical perspective of the Old Testament was attainable in the second century, nor yet of the antecedents of the Christian Revelation. We say that Marcion had no notion of evolution or development in religion, or of progress in the self-revelation of God adapted to the capacities of men from age to age. But no more had other Christians of his time. Yet the problem of the Old Testament could not be solved as he solved it, and the Great Church was right in refusing to make the blunder which

* *Marcion: das Evangelium vom fremden Gott:* Eine Monographie zur Geschichte der Grundlegung der Katholischen Kirche. (Leipsic, J. C. Hinrichs, 1921.)

he made of rejecting it *in toto*: though it could only keep it by a method of interpretation that gave *carte blanche* to fantasy.

That it was right in this refusal is the first of Dr. von Harnack's theses on the subject. The second is that, although at the Reformation Luther's main interest was the same as Marcion's—to find everything in Christ, yet he was not able to escape from the 'fate' of having to retain the Old Testament. He proclaimed the old antithesis between the Law and the Gospel; he based himself on Faith and Grace; yet he attached an importance to Law as a discipline, and he could not take the further step that was needed to set Christianity loose from Old Testament ideas that it superseded.

Marcion had been the first to make Christianity a religion of the Book, though the book to him was the small collection of Christian writings then current in the Church, carefully expurgated, that he made for himself.[1] Luther [in spite of his own preferences, shown, for example, in his contempt for the *Epistle of St. James*] attempted no new 'Canon': and the stress which was laid on the Bible (as against the Church) in all the Reformed Churches reinforced the authority of the Old Testament side by side with that of the New. Indeed there can be little doubt that the Old Testament acquired in the Reformed Churches a religious importance and authority that it had never had before for Christians. 'Had Marcion re-appeared in the time of the Huguenots and Cromwell, he would have been confronted again in the midst of Christendom by the warlike God of Israel that he abhorred.' It is impossible to take your ideas of God from the Old Testament and be a Christian.

It was in the English *Aufklärung* of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century that the question of the right of the Old Testament to its place in the Church was first raised again, and Dr. von Harnack cites Thomas Morgan's *Dialogue between a Christian Deist and a Christian Jew* (1737)[2] as offering the most striking parallels to Marcion's objections, though its inner spirit is not his. Its general tone and its exaggerations were such that it could make no impression on the official Churches, yet it contained so much that was right and of value that it can be described as being of immeasurable importance as marking the rise of a comprehensive, positive and critical, philosophy of history. And it is to the same English movement towards a truer view of the historical development of religion, carried forward by Schleiermacher, Hegel, and all the 'pietistic' school of thinkers impressed by the unique character and worth of the Christian religion, that further progress is credited. The recognition of the immanence of ideas in the actual and of the development of truth in the course of history, on the one hand, and on the other hand as regards the Christian religion in particular, the recognition of the fact that its conception of God, determined as it is by Christ (*sub specie Christi*), is unique, produced the conviction that the Old Testament could no longer be allowed to stand side by side with the New, or be regarded as having religious authority for Christians. It must cease to be a 'canonical' Book for Christendom. So Dr. von Harnack comes to his third thesis, that its retention as 'canonical' to-day (as having an authority in forming the religious beliefs of Christians) is only to be attributed to a paralysis of religious and Church.

[1] *Viz.* the Gospel of St. Luke and the Epistles of St. Paul, Gal., 1, 2 Co., Rom., 1, 2 Thess., Eph., Col., Phil., Phm.

[2] Published anonymously under the title *The Moral Philosopher*. In a Dialogue between Philalethes, a Christian Deist, and Theophanes, a Christian Jew, with the motto 'Bible in Job xxxii. 8. *There is a Reason in Man, and the Inspiration of the Almighty giveth him Understanding.*'

It is well to have a conviction widely shared by Christians to-day thus trenchantly expressed. Though there are many still who regard 'inspiration' as a phenomenon of the past, and think, with the Jews of old, of Divine Revelation as giving the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth—once and for ever; yet the educated Christian world has moved far from the position of the early Church, when the least obvious meaning of passages in the Old Testament was often deemed to be the only religious (and authoritative) meaning, and farther still from the position of our nearer forefathers, whose conception of God was determined even more by the Old Testament than by the New. But it is the view of the Old Testament taken by the Reformed Churches that still stands before the people of England as that of the Church of England, and still inspires many of the most formidable attacks on the Christian religion. Mr. Blatchford's onslaught some twenty years ago was abundantly justified by the official attitude of the Church. Absurd as it seemed to scholars, it was unanswerable by a Church that kept the Old Testament in its 'Canon' of holy scriptures from which the truth of religion was to be learnt. We still read from it in our solemn assemblies lessons that are often absurd, constantly to 'the people' misleading, sometimes indecent, never 'Christian.'

Of 'rejection' of the Old Testament in any formal manner, such as Marcion wished, there can of course be no question to-day. We have already, at least all 'Modern Churchmen' have, rejected it in the true meaning of Marcion's intention. We know that the chief reform in religious education that is needed is to banish the teaching of the Old Testament altogether from our schools, to save the wicked waste of time and opportunity involved in working laboriously verse by verse through its books and writing commentaries on them. *Peake's Commentary* is the very most that anyone ought to read about them, and that not for religion, but only for history—only, that is, with the New Testament open before him, to correct the Old.

No doubt in this way the Old Testament as a whole still has its use for all who can give time to study the history of religions. And perhaps a larger purpose is served by its retention among us Anglicans, if not in the Reformed Churches in general, than Dr. von Harnack seems to have envisaged. As long as we have in our Canon of the Christian Religion the Old Testament, the decisions of the first four General Councils, and the three ancient creeds—all on a level with the New Testament itself—no intelligent person can take the Church's canon of Truth very seriously as limiting his individual freedom of interpretation of the Christian faith. It is indeed a wide and spacious Church of which he is a member. Its religious books are a treasury of the science and religion of the past, and contain much that he is not expected to believe. He may wish that he had not to hear it solemnly read out when he went to worship the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he may wish that about passages in the New Testament too, and a less varied and more coherent Canon—like a Prayer Book expurgated by the *intelligentsia* of Convocation—might tie him down to the assumption that what was left really represented the mind of the Church to-day, and was binding on all its loyal members.

Yet all the same it is true for the great mass of religious people that, as Dr. von Harnack says, the peculiar worth and significance of the Old Testament, of the Prophets in particular, will be appreciated only when it is deprived of the 'canonical' authority to which, for Christians, it has no right.

J. F. Bethune-Baker.

THE MEANING OF PAUL FOR TO-DAY.*

It is well known that reviewers of books have no souls. If they are at all clever they only read enough of a book to be able to say something smart about it; if they are merely diligent they read only so far as to be able to say something that will not be gainsaid. This book comes in so unobtrusive a guise—like Lady Clare in a russet gown—that such soulless reviewers will either refuse to deal with it or begin an inconspicuous paragraph with the words, 'This excellent little book—' The book is not little, except in the sense in which the soul of wit may be said to be little.

I got *The Meaning of Paul for To-day* quite accidentally, and not being a reviewer, I read it through. It was December, the season of gifts; and, receiving unexpected entertainment from the reading, I sent it, as an unassuming gift, to a friend who chanced to be also a learned archbishop. Archbishops, of course, have more calls on their time and attention than anyone else; but this one replied: 'I have already read through rapidly the greater part of Mr. Dodd's book, though it arrived only yesterday, and found it most interesting and illuminating—especially in certain ways of putting things. It is very fresh and there is sound learning behind every word of it.' Later on, it was sent, with other books for a foreign library, to the care of one of the most distinguished of Continental theologians. He also was entrapped into rapid reading before passing it on, and wrote: 'The book is full of interesting and heart searching points of view.' I should perhaps have distrusted my own liking had it not been thus buttressed by the demi-gods; I note too, that 'Artifex,' in the *Manchester Guardian*—who perhaps comes into the same category—says that everyone ought to read it.

The book as a whole ought to have special interest for readers of the *Modern Churchman* on the ground that it helps us to realise both how new to the world were certain fruitful ideas which appeared in the earliest Christianity and also that these ideas were not original to St. Paul but to Jesus Christ. We Liberal Christians are to-day up against two classes of people who are busy telling the world there was nothing original in the teaching of Jesus Christ. The one class are those extreme critics who, in seeking to free the soul from the external authority of traditional dogma and of belief in the miraculous, present Jesus as a deluded enthusiast teaching only the mistaken apocalyptic ideas of His time. The other is the more weighty group: they are those Neo-Catholics who accept greedily this destructive criticism concerning the teaching of Jesus in order to throw the emphasis upon His miraculous character and the miraculous nature of the Church's inspiration and of the Sacramental life. But, rather than this, we conceive that if Christianity is to continue to be the world's greatest religious force, it can only be because Christians believe that our Lord gave to the world, both by His teaching and example, a new conception of God and of man, conceptions not found in the Old Testament or in Apocalyptic or in pagan literature, but which, ever since the Galilean ministry, have been a ferment of life always spreading and developing by the continued inspiration of the immanent Spirit to the working out of God's transcendent purpose.

* By C. Harold Dodd, M.A. (The Swarthmore Press), price 6/-.

The bases of Mr. Dodd's study are the eight Epistles now attributed to St. Paul by a consensus of students, together with II Thessalonians and Ephesians, in the Pauline authorship of which he, with many others, believes—ten brief letters, which take us back to a time when hundreds of men who had known our Lord's earthly ministry were still alive. Mr. Dodd's analysis of many passages shows that St. Paul's ethical teaching was dependent on Jesus.

> 'If he refuses to "know Christ after the flesh," it means that he will not risk a harking-back to the temporary conditions of the Galilean ministry when the Spirit of God is clearly leading out into new fields. The issues of that ministry have been gathered up in the new experience of "Christ in me," and that experience gives a living Christ, who leads ever onward those who will adventure with Him, and not a prophet of the past, whose words might pass into a dead tradition.
>
> 'At the same time, the indwelling Christ is continuous with the Man who died; and Paul clearly assumes a knowledge of the Jesus of the Gospels in his correspondents' (p. 92).
>
> 'In its new morality his ethical teaching embodies a good deal of the new morality which contemporary Stoicism was proclaiming, as well as of the humaner Jewish morals of the tradition of Jesus ben Sirach and the "Wisdom" literature. The wise moral teacher will express the ideals he wishes to promulgate as far as possible in terms already appreciated by his hearers. But the unity of the whole depends upon an informing spirit. It is the character of Christ which makes it a whole. "I urge you by virtue of the meekness and sweet-reasonableness of Christ"; "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ"; "Whatever you do, in act or work, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus." When Paul uses such language, it is more than a form of words. It represents a settled and reasonable conviction, first that where there is knowledge of good among men it is the work of Christ the life-giving Spirit, and secondly that now that Christ has lived the human life we have a clear line of definition, a test for all our moral intuitions. In the whole of Paul's moral teachings a single and self-consistent ideal is implied, and that ideal is the character of Jesus Christ' (p. 147).

Professor Burkitt,[1] in a vivid passage describing post-exilic Judaism, shows what a large element in early Pharisaism was the expectation of God's destructive intervention. The world was to be reconciled to the law of God (as revealed to the Jews) by the external force of an imminent cataclysmic crisis. From this view Pharisaism, after the sack of Jerusalem, shook itself free, but it passed, with other ideas of contemporary religions, into the Church. The great interest of Mr. Dodd's book for us centres in his contention that such destructive intervention could be no vindication of Jesus Christ or of the God and Father whose character He proclaimed and exemplified.

> 'The story of the Gospels is an unfinished drama. Its historic interest is pivoted upon the conflict between the new liberating message of the kingdom and the religious system represented by the Pharisees . . . There is, on the one hand, the Way of the Nazarene, with His startling assertions and denials; on the other hand, all that the piety of the time prized as the essentials of a revealed religion.

[1] *Jewish and Christian Apocalypses*, pp. 1—10.

The plot thickens, until in the dim morning light of the fatal Passover the antagonists stand face to face—a nation on one side, the rejected Prophet on the other. The clash comes, and when the earthquake and the eclipse are past, the Established Order remains supreme. The gospel of emancipation has been added to the *limbo* of shattered illusions, and Pharisaism is triumphant. That is the crisis of the movement. The situation holds all the elements of real tragedy: a conflict of passionate human interests in which ancient good, become uncouth, overcomes the better that might be, and the stirrings of the human spirit after freedom are baffled by historic necessity. But it is evident that the plot is not finished. The whole development has pointed forward, to this conclusion certainly, but not to this as conclusion . . . In the intoxicating joy of Easter morning the defeat is forgotten, and the divine Victor holds the stage. But the faith of the Resurrection is so far a matter of personal religious experience: it is not, as yet, history . . . Various hands have essayed the construction of a convincing Last Act. For the 'realist' school the illusion of the Resurrection is but the deepest note in a final and irredeemable catastrophe. The President of the Immortals has finished His sport with the Nazarene. This is, however, to abandon the data of the plot; for the drama is cast not for disaster, but for joy. For the school of romantic melodrama there must be a vindication of poetic justice; and the Risen Christ takes His sword of vengeance and sees His desire upon His enemies. It matters here little whether the *mise en scène* is a Michelangelesque Last Day, or whether, the *venue* being removed to solid earth, Christ is shown triumphing over the ruins of Jerusalem in the fatal year of Titus's victory. Such a *dénouement* is a denial of the central motive of the drama. The character of the Hero must be consistent with itself; and the triumph of a vengeful Messiah is not the triumph of the Victim of Calvary. It is therefore no resolution of the tragic knot. For a convincing *dénouement* the Hero of the drama—the Speaker of the Sermon on the Mount, the Prisoner of the Sanhedrin, the Bearer of the curse of the Law on Golgotha—must emerge, He and no other, as the conqueror, the conqueror by His own weapons and no other, of that unchanged Pharisaism, so noble in its stuff, so pernicious in the final issue of its spirit, which had by an inner necessity of its being destroyed Him . . .

'This is the *dénouement* which history has written. The beginning of it can be told in a few words: "A Hebrew of the Hebrews, in regard to the law a Pharisee . . . I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus . . . I am crucified with Christ, and yet I am alive—not I, but Christ is alive in me." Was ever revenge more complete? Imagine this man . . . among those fanatical Jews who would not enter Pilate's hall "lest they should be defiled," yet stood without clamouring for the death of the Carpenter-Prophet who had dared affront the majesty of their hoary law. And then see him yielding utterly to the spell of the Cross upon which he or his like had fastened the Rejected. That is real conquest. It is the method of the Christian Revolution.'[2]

If anyone will take the trouble to read the Jewish and early Christian Apocalypses (they are easily accessible in translation), he will see at a

[2] Pp. 13—16.

glance that their dominant idea is the conversion of the world by destructive force. God's mercy consists only in giving sinners a long chance; after that it is implacable vengeance. The question at issue is whether this is the *motif* of the Gospel of Jesus, and whether St. Paul understood it to be so.

Most of us have stood in the Sistine Chapel and felt troubled by the grotesque contrast between the beautiful and vengeful cruelty of the Being pictured behind the altar and the character of our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ. If the historic Jesus is not the embodiment of the vengeful justice of Jewish imagination, then the light that He brought to the world is not the mere pale reflection of Apocalyptic ideas that free-thinkers or Modernist Catholics wish to believe.

The Meaning of Paul for To-day is the more interesting on this point because it is not written with any purpose of engaging in this controversy. It the more effectively throws a strong side-light upon it by a scholarly analysis of the import of St. Paul's language concerning the Divine Commonwealth or Reign of God, concerning God's attitude to the wicked—the 'wrath' of apocalyptic imagery, and concerning the relation of Christian ethic to the historic Jesus.

L. Dougall.

CORRESPONDENCE

THE CREED OF THE RE-UNITED CHURCH.

To the Editor of *The Modern Churchman.*

Sir,

I send herewith my answers to the four questions:—

1. Belief in the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of men and an acceptance of Christ as our Lord and Master, and of His example and teaching as the rule of life.

2 and 3. No, unless in some simple form such as that suggested by the Rev. T. Watson (Ian Maclaren) in his book, *The Mind of the Master:*

> 'I believe in the Fatherhood of God,
> I believe in the words of Jesus,
> I believe in the service of love,
> I believe in the unworldly life,
> I believe in the Beatitudes,
> I promise to trust God, and follow Christ, to forgive my enemies, and to seek after the righteousness of God'—

or the following suggested by Mr. C. F. Russell in *The Modern Churchman* of February:

> 'I believe that God is Love;
> I accept Jesus Christ as my Master and Teacher;
> I acknowledge that it is the will of God that I should love and serve my fellow-men.'

The three existing creeds do not embody the religious beliefs of to-day, and can only be accepted by re-interpreting them in a sense which was certainly not in the minds of their composers. As has been well said:

> 'Fellowship is unduly narrowed and embarrassed by the Church's insistence on the definitions of the past. There is a limit to the legitimacy of symbolical interpretation of the creeds, and its adoption does not inspire confidence. As to the conditions of Christian unity,

no intellectual agreement is to be expected; why look for any other basis of unity than the confession of discipleship? What Christ never insisted upon, neither let us insist upon.'

The Athanasian Creed, moreover, is the only one of the three containing any appeal to goodness, and that only in connection with its reward, and coupled with the doctrine of the everlasting punishment of all 'that have done evil,' a doctrine which to-day has happily but few believers in the Church of England; and in all three creeds one looks in vain for any reference to the charity that is greater than faith or hope. Christ held up a heretic Samaritan as the example for all time of the Christian character, and His test by which His disciples were to be recognized was no dogmatic test, but that they had 'love one to another.'

4. Such a simple creed as I have quoted above might appropriately be used on such occasions as baptisms, confirmations and ordinations, and perhaps on other special occasions, and on the great festivals such as Christmas and Easter, &c.

ARTHUR A. PEARSON,

February 21st, 1921.

THE CREED OF A RE-UNITED CHURCH.

To the Editor of *The Modern Churchman*.

Sir,

May I put in an unsolicited word in support of a view which I do not think has found expression in any of the answers yet given to the questions propounded by the Geneva Conference. I deprecate any mutilation or re-editing of the historic creeds, on the ground that they are forms of religious art of a high order, and speak to us (if they are allowed to) in the language which is common to all art, that is, they present to us facts of a different order from the facts of history and science. They speak most clearly and directly to us when presented musically. We cannot be indifferent to the fact that the greatest religious music of Europe, if not of the world, has been associated with the Mass. Palestrina, Mozart and Schubert knew well the true value of the Creeds as the deepest emotional revelation of the truth of God's Being. 'It has nothing to do with Jesus' said a literary and artistic critic to me after hearing a Mass of Beethoven. I disagree with him. It has a great deal to do with Jesus, but most to do with the external facts of His life on earth. To mutilate the Nicene Creed would be a crime. Even to translate it is some loss. I suggest, therefore, that the same treatment which has often been suggested for the Athanasian Creed should be applied to the Nicene. That is, it should be sung as an anthem, rather than recited as a confession of faith. The use of the Apostles' Creed might then, as one of the recent writers suggests, be dropped, and we could with a good conscience proceed to the formulation of those short statements of belief, which several of the writers have suggested, to serve as forms of baptismal confession and the like. That such are necessary is plain, unless we desire to have the full flood of Theosophy, Christian Science, and Spiritism, with their blend of half-truths and nonsensical charlatanism pouring into a Church which can assimilate much that is exotic, but hardly these. Truly, the Church was right in refusing to recognize Gnosticism as Christian.

GUY KENDALL (Headmaster U.C.S.).

February 22nd, 1921.

THE CREED OF THE RE-UNITED CHURCH.

To the Editor of *The Modern Churchman.*

IR,

We are familiar with a not uncommon and quite sincere objection to he historic creeds, an objection which comes from within the Church of ngland and proceeds from the conviction that the creeds are at once adequate and misleading expressions of Christian belief. But apparently he present need for a new creed is supposed to follow from the proposi- on that our Nonconformist brethren shall re-unite with the Church of ngland. But a large consensus of Nonconformist opinion is stoutly set gainst anything suggestive of re-absorption by the Church of England. o make the concession of a new and unoffending creed, in the place of he venerable forms which are supposed to present so serious a stumbling- lock, will not remove the objection to re-absorption; for that objection s inherent in the self-respect of successful independent denominations, hose polities vary both from one another and from that of the Church f England. The removal or drastic re-statement or truncation of the istoric creeds will not seriously mitigate a resistance which springs from is or other causes, among them being not improbably—as Catholic ideas f the Church percolate and draw individual Nonconformists towards the hurch of England, which provides the national expression of such ideas -a fear of the very re-absorption which invites resistance. A disposition o reject Dr. Headlam's proposal (v. *Bampton Lectures,* 1920) to make he Nicene Creed the basis of subscription for a re-united Church may ell be traceable to causes quite outside the arena of credal controversy.

The Creeds are so ancient that they must be patient of such re-inter- retation as goes with an *ex animo* subscription in the light of new under- tanding of the Scriptures, from which ultimately the creeds take their uthority (Art. VIII). The older the creed, the greater the difficulty of ecciving it *e mente auctoris,* and the more warranted the claim to free- om of interpretation. But a new creed, if it be patched up from the ommon denominators of divided Churches, will be non-committal and vertebrate; or else, if it be hatched from the incubator of an ecclesias- cal cabal, it will be quite certain to force new fetters on the faithful. he first event would prevent the preservation of the full, comprehensive, atholic Christianity. The second would require the battle of liberal terpretation to be re-fought with every received reconstruction of theo- gical values. Re-statement has long been the demand of those to whom, hen they shall have got the formularies into their own terms, the rest eems to be plain sailing. But now the battle begins to be fought on her fields. Continuous reformation of thought may or may not secure fter a time some re-statement of language. But, as the Master of Jesus nplies, a new creed which is right to-day would be wrong to-morrow. he historic creeds in all likelihood will admit of such continuous inter- retation as the truth seems to require. And to their tentative recon- ruction, to serve the policy of the moment, I should be disposed to pply the customary formula of Lord Melbourne in the political sphere, Why can't you let it alone?'

J. WORSLEY BODEN,

Hon. Sec. Junior Section of the Churchmen's Union.

GENTLEMEN IN HOLY ORDERS.

To the Editor of *The Modern Churchman.*

Sir,

It seems to me that you have succeeded in saying some very difficult things. Those who agree with you are at a disadvantage, because for obvious reasons they cannot say all they know in print, still less on the platform or at a clerical meeting; and there are certain ultimate realities which belong not to logic, but to aesthetics. There is, of course, much to be said on the other side, especially about the un-Christain snobbishness of the anti-snob in 'Society,' but let Mr. Coulthard ask himself whether he really believes that there is no difference between a gentleman and a Christian. I know too many people who aim at being gentlefolk first and Christians afterwards. The public school ideal and the Christian ideal are not identical, and unless Mr. Coulthard is careful he will confuse them, which is the last thing he wishes to do. But allow me to put my criticisms of his letter in the form of Twelve Fundamental Fallacies :—

1. That Mr. Chesterton was not standing on his head, and actually meant what he said.
2. That a man who is *ex-hypothesei* 'superior' cannot be so without adopting an 'attitude of superiority.'
3. That the masses of the people have been largely alienated from the Church by 'subconscious attitudes and tricks of manner' on the part of the clergy.
4. That the masses are the Church, and that 'ladies and gentlemen' may be ignored.
5. That a gentleman as such (not a scholar) is apt to be unintelligible to simple people.
6. That the progress of the Church to-day is largely due to a lower level of birth and education and a narrower outlook among the clergy.
7. That the High Church movement has been a success, and has not widened the gulf between clergy and laity.
8. That the chief founders of our Indian Empire were 'in most cases gentlemen *in no sense of the word.*'
9. That the English people have 'passed through self-assertion to self-respect.'
10. That birth and station are advantages to race horses and prize cattle, but 'meretricious accidents' in men and women.
11. That a man in whom the Spirit of God dwells is properly called not a prophet or a saint, but a gentleman.
12. That the word 'gentleman,' like 'miracle,' may be made to mean anything to you.

T. F. ROYDS.

Tushingham Vicarage, Whitchurch, Salop.

CORRECTION.

Page 566 l. 31 from top, in the first clause of Professor Bethune-Baker's creed, read *Father of all men* for *in human life.*—Ed. *Modern Churchman.*

[The Editor regrets to be unable to find space for a number of letters.]

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